

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following is a complete listing of the claims in this application, reflects all changes currently being made to the claims, and replaces all earlier versions and all earlier listings of the claims:

Claim 1. (currently amended): An image reading apparatus, connected to a plurality of image forming apparatuses via a network, for [[and]] transmitting an image signal representing an image that has been read to one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses, said image reading apparatus comprising:

generation means for generating an image signal on the basis of reading the image;

selection means for selecting one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses for receipt of the generated image signal;

determination means for determining whether or not the selected image forming apparatus requests input of management information relating to a user;

input means for inputting the management information in accordance with a result of the determination by said determination means;

transmitting means for transmitting the inputted management information to the selected image forming apparatus;

reception means for receiving a result of authenticating the transmitted management information from the selected image forming apparatus of a determination by the selected image forming apparatus authenticating the management information; and

control means for controlling reading of the image and transmission of the transmission of the generated image signal to the selected image forming apparatus, representing the read image to the selected image forming apparatus, in accordance with the received result of the determination authentication of the transmitted management information from the selected image forming apparatus.

Claim 2. (previously presented): An image reading apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said control means compresses the image signal prior to transmitting the image signal.

Claims 3-5. (canceled)

Claim 6. (currently amended): An image reading method for controlling an image reading apparatus, connected to a plurality of image forming apparatuses via a network, [[and]] transmitting an image signal representing an image that has been read to one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses, said image reading method comprising the steps of:

generating an image signal on the basis of reading the image;
selecting one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses for
receipt of the generated image signal;
determining whether or not the selected image forming apparatus requests input of management information relating to a user;

inputting the management information in accordance with a result of the determination in said determining step;

transmitting the inputted management information to the selected image forming apparatus;

receiving a result of authenticating the transmitted management information from the selected image forming apparatus of a determination by the selected image forming apparatus authenticating the management information; and

controlling reading of the image and transmission of the transmission of the generated image signal to the selected image forming apparatus, representing the read image to the selected image forming apparatus, in accordance with the received result of the determination authentication of the transmitted management information from the selected image forming apparatus.

Claim 7. (previously presented): An image reading method according to Claim 6, wherein said control step includes compressing the image signal prior to transmitting the image signal.

Claims 8-14. (canceled)

Claim 15. (currently amended): A computer readable memory storing a program executing an image reading method for controlling an image reading apparatus, connected to a plurality of image forming apparatuses via a network, [[and]] transmitting

an image signal representing an image that has been read to one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses, said program comprising:

code for generating an image signal on the basis of reading the image;

code for selecting one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses
for receipt of the generated image signal;

code for determining whether or not the selected image forming apparatus requests input of management information relating to a user;
code for inputting the management information in accordance with a result of the determination by said determination code;

code for transmitting the inputted management information to the selected image forming apparatus;

code for receiving a result of authenticating the transmitted management information from the selected image forming apparatus ~~of a determination by the selected image forming apparatus authenticating the management information~~; and

code for controlling reading of the image and transmission of the transmission of the generated image signal to the selected image forming apparatus, representing the read image to the selected image forming apparatus; in accordance with the received result of the determination authentication of the transmitted management information from the selected image forming apparatus.

Claim 16. (currently amended): A computer readable memory according to Claim 15, wherein said control code compresses the image signal prior to transmitting the image signal.

Claims 17-25. (canceled)

Claim 26. (currently amended): An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said selection means selects the selected image forming apparatus performs printing based on the received image signal according to the generated image signal.

Claim 27. (previously presented): An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the management information includes at least a user ID, a division ID, or a title ID for the authentication determination at the selected image forming apparatus.

Claim 28-33. (canceled)